

The Leprechaun and the Pot of Gold

Ireland

In a place called Ireland they say that leprechauns are tiny little people who make shoes for the fairies. They live and work alone in out-of-the-way places. They each wear a red jacket, a hat, and a leather apron. They each have big, pointed ears and a round nose. They are never more than three inches tall.

Best of all, every leprechaun keeps a pot of gold hidden under the ground. If you can catch a leprechaun, you are very lucky. If you can keep your eyes on him, he must lead you to his pot of gold.



One time a young girl was walking in the forest. She was looking for flowers to pick. As she walked, she heard the sound of a hammer. Tap, tap, tap. It wasn't very loud. It sounded like a very small hammer.

"I must be close to a leprechaun," said the girl.

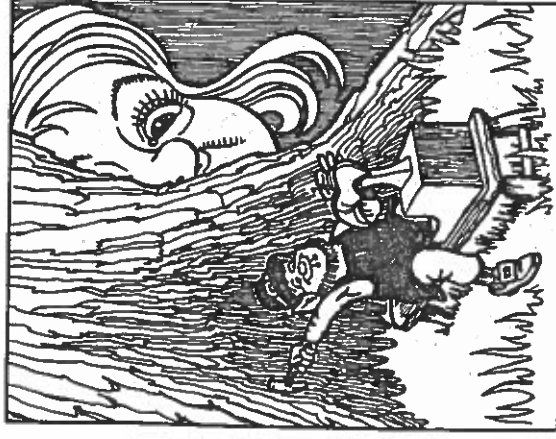
She followed the sound. It was coming from behind a big tree. She walked up to the

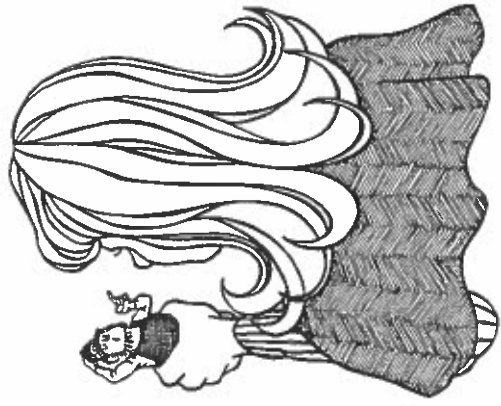
tree. She peeked around the wide trunk. Sure enough, there was a leprechaun! He was making a pair of shoes for a fairy.

The young girl reached out her hand. She grabbed the little leprechaun. "I've got you!" she screamed.

"Sure and you do," said the leprechaun. "I guess now you want me to lead you to my pot of gold."

"That's the rule," said the girl. "If I catch a leprechaun, he must lead me to his pot of gold."





"There is another rule," said the leprechaun. "You may not take your eyes off me. Not even for a second. You must keep your eyes on me at all times until we reach the gold."

The girl didn't move her eyes from the leprechaun. "Now, where is the gold?" she asked. "Is it under the rainbow?"

"Perhaps it is, perhaps it isn't," said the leprechaun. "But we'll never find the gold if that big tree falls on you."

The girl kept her eyes on the leprechaun. "You are trying to trick me into looking away," she said. "I've heard that about leprechauns. But I know better. I won't fall for your tricks."

"Walk over into that field of flowers," said the leprechaun, pointing. "I'll take you to the pot of gold. Watch out! There's a rabbit behind you and he's going to jump on your head!"

The girl almost looked behind her. But she didn't. She kept her eyes right on the leprechaun. "Let's keep on walking," she said.

It began to rain. As fast as it began, the rain stopped. "Look!" shouted the leprechaun. "There's a rainbow!"

A rainbow! The girl felt sure the pot of gold must be there! She looked up toward the sky. But she saw no rainbow. Then she knew she had been tricked.

She looked back down to her hands. The leprechaun was gone! The girl looked all around her, but the little person was not there. By looking for the rainbow, the girl had taken her eyes off the leprechaun. The pot of gold was not to be hers.

In one way or another, the leprechaun always gets away. But people keep trying to find the one that will lead to a pot of gold.

